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Paradigm Shift, Then and Now: The Shakespearean *Winter's Tale* and Renewal Through the Feminine

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This paper explores postmodern and Shakespearean-baroque parallels in asking, “Can we make a New World?” In Shakespeare’s case, paradigm shift was occurring willy-nilly—a New World hovering into view, geographically, socio-politically, spiritually, and through a science that shifted views of earth and heaven. This inquiry into *The Winter’s Tale*, in search of a new coherence then and now, discovers that Shakespeare envisioned a rebalancing of hyper-masculine internal and external life by way of the Feminine, both youthful and mature. Portraying the tragic ruler at the center of his tale as part *puer* and part jealous tyrant, Shakespeare established what is almost a case history, one that serves to type the Masculine that lacks balance. He viewed the Feminine in vividly drawn characters, but also as archetypes; as to the youthful and mature Feminine, he matched these respectively—although not exclusively—with virtues of fertile natural renewal and compassionate advocacy of social justice.

Cultures can run aground, find themselves stranded in an unproductive winter. A culture can respond by evolving or careening. Here are comments on Shakespeare’s Jacobean age by a courtier comparing the court of Elizabeth, a relatively solid, sober predecessor, with that of the newly ascended King James I. They are from a 1606 letter by Sir John Harington regarding a banquet for James’ brother-in-law:

I have much marvelled at these strange pageantries, and they do bring to my remembrance what passed of this sort in our Queen’s days; of which I was sometime an humble presenter and assistant: but I neer did see such lack of good order, discretion, and sobriety, as I have now done. (Davies, 1959, p. 120 as cited in Hunt, 1995)

Harington summarized, “We are going on, heareabouts, as if the devil was contriving every man should blow up himself, by wild riot, excess, and devastation of time and temperance” (p. 120).

If this inquiry looked into a play such as Shakespeare’s *Timon of Athens* (date uncertain, c. 1607), it would focus on the relation between greed and disintegration. James was able, in a short decade, to nearly bankrupt the royal treasury both through the combination of his spendthrift behavior—much of it motivated by sexual passion for Robert Carr and

then later George Villiers (made Earl of Buckingham in 1617)—and through the greed of his courtiers and subjects. The present inquiry instead examines the destructive skew to the sexual and gender behaviors of King Leontes in *The Winter’s Tale* (c. 1610-11). These behaviors reflected imbalances in the Jacobean court, less characteristic of Elizabeth’s court but re-introduced and amplified by James. It is worth noting that in Jacobean literature sexual chaos typified social chaos—and it was a time of frequent syphilitic plague—especially in the locale of that great social experiment, the comparatively huge city of London. In turn, Jacobean courtiers took social chaos as a sign that the cosmos was out of joint.

Capra (1999) commented on present-day paradigms, one of them obsolete and the other promising. In his book *The Tao of Physics* he linked the needed shift in paradigm to gender as it plays out in both internal and external worlds:

At present our attitude is too yang—to use again Chinese phraseology—too rational, male and aggressive. Many...[scientists] support a society which is still based on the mechanistic, fragmented world view, without seeing that science points beyond such a view, towards a oneness of the universe which includes not only our natural environment but also our fellow human beings...The survival

of our whole civilization may depend on whether we can bring about such a change. It will depend, ultimately, on our ability to adopt some of the yin attitudes of Eastern mysticism; to experience the wholeness of nature and the art of living with it in harmony. (p. 307)

Capra added an afterword to his fourth edition, written a quarter century after the first publication of the book, in which he clarified that many worldwide crises are in fact “different facets of one single crisis, which is essentially a crisis of perception” (p. 325). He further specified that a failing of the old paradigm is “the belief that a society in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male is one that is ‘natural’” (p. 325).

There are resonances between the scenario at Leontes’ court in *The Winter’s Tale*—the plot of which will be reviewed shortly—and that in the administration of President Lyndon Baines Johnson (LBJ). Ellsberg (2002), advisor to LBJ, gave the following critique of the circle of counselors to the president, of which he himself was a part. He acknowledged that they could have stopped the Vietnam War in such a way as to prevent seven years worth of death; he reproached himself for that. They were Kennedy’s brain trust people inherited by Johnson; his own degree was from Harvard. Why did he wait so long to blow the whistle on a war everyone knew could not be won, including, according to Ellsberg, Johnson himself? “I put personal loyalty to the president (and to my career, my access to inside information and influence, however I idealized my purposes) above all else” (p. x).¹ Ellsberg said that he and other insiders were badgered by their wives and children, wives apparently willing to act against narrow self-interest: Stop the war, stop the war. They shut out this advice. At the end of a speech on this topic, the interviewer asked Ellsberg the final “give us the low-down” question (oral communication, *Commonwealth Club*, San Francisco, October 28, 2002). He obliged. What was the single most important reason no one vociferously objected? They were afraid to be viewed as queer. I substitute, in this paraphrase, a gentler word, but deliver accurately the gist. In short, their fear could not be divorced from contempt for the effeminate and the Feminine. A bellicose society subordinates the Feminine both externally and internally.

Comparisons of Leontes’ court with the later Nixon White House or the neo-conservative administration of George W. Bush might be equally apt. For example, the Bush administration seemed to agree

fully with an underlying neo-conservative premise: The world is a jungle and brute force must persuade when sheer superiority of worldview (as they would have it) fails to do so. Lakoff (2004), in his book *Don’t Think of an Elephant*, assigned to this conservative sensibility the “strong father” ethic, one in which females and what are commonly taken to be feminine values are decisively subordinated.

Before reviewing the plot of *The Winter’s Tale*, one should take note of the religious and socio-cultural context for Shakespeare’s late plays. These plays were written at a time when reports were coming back from the English colonizing of Virginia and from other travels across the Atlantic. *The Tempest* (c. 1611) shows quite directly that Shakespeare was contemplating a New World. *The Winter’s Tale* (c. 1610-1611), which is the focus of this inquiry, portrays even more explicitly a shift in paradigm on every level—psychological, religious, socio-cultural, metaphysical, and, seemingly, cosmic.

The context for Shakespeare’s late writing matters a good deal. There were promising aspects of his contemporary world, as there are promising aspects of the richness of our present day global society, so diverse and so actively interconnected:

In the opening years of the century, there occurred a moment of convergence. Church and State, in the Anglican settlement and Stuart monarchy; courtly and popular; the traditional ethos of the countryside and the critical alertness of the capital city—these for that moment, came together to a degree far greater than they, or their equivalents, ever achieved in any other time. (Cruttwell, 1970, p. 249)

Shakespeare wrote at a watershed moment: an age of discovery, when a new cosmology and empirical method were in ascendancy, when the Renaissance had taken hold (Schavrien, 2009). There was a sense of loss at this moment as well: Philosophically, the medieval Great Chain of Being was collapsing and, in actual fact, the pope no longer dominated the church hierarchy in England. There were replacements: the new cosmological knowledge; the king as sovereign over the Church of England; the vernacular Bible, published in 1611 due to James’ efforts, opening a direct conduit to God. But the new orders were by no means as stable or reassuring as the old. Likewise the merchant class was interpenetrating the aristocratic class and vice versa at a disconcerting rate. So much was in flux.

Addressing the spiritual tensions, Shakespeare's ecumenical compassion encompassed Greek and Roman pagan sensibilities, but also medieval views from chivalric to those of miracle/mystery/morality plays. Into this mix Shakespeare added contemporary folk paganism—still alive and well in this Jacobean Age but soon to be gutted by the Puritan Revolution (Cruttwell, 1970, p. 254)—and the relatively suppressed Catholic religion (in England at least) alongside the relatively new (1536) Anglican one. All these cohabit side by side in his late plays. He retraces the past, but at the same time his Prospero in *The Tempest* reaches “the Bermudas” by proxy, sending Ariel there to fetch some dew (Shakespeare, 1611/1980a, 1.2.230). Shakespeare thus did more than retrospect; he surveyed prospects for a New World (Schavrien, 2009).

Beginnings and Endings:

Utopia, Arcadia, Paradise Lost and Found, and the End of Times

To track internal shifts that parallel or even catalyze external paradigm shifts, it helps to keep watch for archetypal energies and events. Jung called archetypes that attach, not to a figure, but rather to a place or happening, transformative archetypes. Beginnings and endings often have such an archetypal dimension: Liminal moments such as these characterize scenarios not just in Shakespeare's external cultural world but also inside the plays themselves. Here is where examination with a Jungian lens brings matters into focus. The lens applies usefully not just to liminal moments but also to gender. In the analysis to come of *The Winter's Tale*, one witnesses a king in a pitched battle with Anima, the largely unconscious Feminine aspect of the male. He exiles the Feminine, then reincorporates it into pantheon, realm, and self; the reincorporation moves all these toward healing and wholeness.

But archetype also illumines various other ways we humans have of refreshing our vision and restoring our hope. The plays mine archetypal liminal moments and places, ones that escape the usual structure of society and occur in the interstices, those at-the-edge moments and places. Characters arrive at islands they perceive as utopias (Marshall, 1991, pp. 107-117; Ryan, 2003, pp. 27-53), happen upon Arcadia (cf. the home of Perdita, shepherdess and hijacked princess, in *The Winter's Tale*), find themselves in a paradise (cf. Florizel who wants to watch eternally Perdita's wave-like dance, forever in motion, forever the same [Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 4.4.141-143]); the paradise is, of course,

soon lost and must be found again. The plays are thus full of archetypal beginnings and the mindstates that revert repeatedly to such beginnings, full of hope all the while.

The late play characters, often in their final scenes, also arrive at an eschatological moment; they meet with collective eschatologies implicit or explicit as many threads are gathered in a last scene and things are set right in a fashion that goes beyond social, that is cosmic as well; the wished-for end of times arrives (Marshall, 1991, p. xiii). Shakespeare's baroque sensibility, with its songs of innocence and experience, is rife with moments that are beginnings, endings, beginnings which threaten to be endings, and endings which transmute into beginnings.

The following remarks on Late Style apply to Shakespeare, who wrote in a late personal style and a late-in-era style as well. As with postmodern styles, these are styles of post-innocence. They have their way of accommodating discontinuity. McMullan (2007) surveyed and summed up prevailing views on late work:

[The] role of late work [is] a return to something earlier, even to something frankly primitive, along perhaps with a tendency towards typology or, more intrusively, mythopoeia... . There is...a broad and radical perspective, that of an artistic achievement which sweeps both back to the distant past and forward to a perhaps equally distant future...offering a glimpse of a future that is always paradoxically a past. (p. 44)

The Personal is Political and Cosmic Too

Although the latter half of this inquiry puts much emphasis on political and socio-cultural landscapes, the introductory gambit in exploring *The Winter's Tale* is deeply psychological. It presents a kind of case history of a man almost inexplicably seized with a jealousy so intense that it is wildly destructive to self, family, and realm, seeming to put even the cosmos out of joint. As the inquiry expands in search of healing for all concerned, themes resurface with which a postmodern may resonate. What is distinctly Christian baroque in the drama is the opening emphasis on Original Sin. But what is universal is the challenge of dealing with fractures within the human soul and psyche, and the relation between these and the consequent fracturing in external worlds. Understanding the relation makes way for a solution.

The Winter's Tale and Renewal Through the Feminine

In *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare portrayed a young fresh feminine character, eloquent and intelligent. This is Perdita, daughter to the King. In her frank sensuality directed toward the one man she has chosen, and excellently chosen, she suggests a partial solution for renewing the species. The solution entails the new-fangled, in Shakespeare's time, art of grafting: Such a grafting, between her and a truly good prince, would benefit from the freshness of her vision and the robust fecundity of her young body, which had known only the life of the country rather than that of the court. About this, more later. To the exploration of the young Feminine can be added one of the mature Feminine, which in a different way makes possible a renewed, perhaps even redeemed, species and therefore a New World. The two characters who represent the mature Feminine, Hermione the Queen and Paulina the counselor, speak truth to power; they also exercise exemplary receptivity and agency in the fulfilling of providential design.

One may fairly ask "Can such a creature as we are make a New World? In what manner? In what context?" In the course of the drama that deals with this question, the Feminine is thrown into exile at the hands of the criminally foolish King, Leontes, and then reintegrated in such a way that the family, court, realm, and even pantheon are renewed.

Plot Review

Eden Before the Fall

As the play opens there is a kind of Eden in the Sicilian Court of Leontes. All the king's subjects have great hope in the male heir. At the same time the King and Queen are flourishing and have enjoyed a heartwarming nine months together with Leontes' best friend and ally from Bohemia, King Polixenes. The sheer innocence of it all is well expressed when Polixenes describes the childhood companionship between him and Leontes, of which this present visit is an extension:

We were as twinned lambs that did frisk i' the sun
And bleat the one at th' other. What we changed
Was innocence for innocence ...

...Had we pursued that life,
And our weak spirits ne'er been higher reared
With stronger blood, we should have answered
heaven

Boldly "Not guilty," the imposition cleared
Hereditary ours. (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 1.2. 67-75)

In the banter that follows between him and Leontes' wife, Hermione, he admits to implying that women caused whatever trouble ensued in their lives, from Original Sin until now. When pressed, however, he and Leontes seem to concede that their own sexual appetite (the "dagger" they were admonished as boys to keep "muzzled" [1.2.156]) might have led them astray as well. Nevertheless what the court audience, and the theater audience, witnesses at present are only a flourishing three-way friendship and a thriving court. The exchange is simply warm and witty banter.

Leontes' Jealousy:

How the World Turns Topsy-Turvy

In a breathtakingly short time, however, Leontes finds himself playing the snake to his own Eden, imagining it is his wife and friend who do the damage. In his self-deluding mind, they are betraying him and the child in her belly belongs to Polixenes. Why does Leontes gratuitously poison this sweet three-way alliance? There is an element of opacity about the motivation; as with a baroque black shadow, the obfuscation at times prevails and should do so. On the one hand the jealousy starts up suddenly out of nowhere, makes no sense, is wantonly self-and-other destructive. Still there are occasional glints of light that play in the shadow, varying motivations that propose themselves. Jealousy of the relation between wife and best friend is certainly there; it seems to be a jealousy that goes both ways, hetero- and homoerotic. Coloring the energies, the jealousy seems to carry along with it the days of youth, the present pre-pubescent youth of his son, who participates in the scene, and the youthful times with Polixenes—as if not just wife and friend but father and mother were frustrating his desires. (The accompanying visuals: Hermione on the stage is, as her attendants have remarked, also appearing heavily pregnant at this moment when jealousy seizes Leontes). Somehow, if Leontes cannot prevail upon his best friend to further prolong the nine-month stay, as he attempts to do—and if his wife, to his crestfallen dismay, outdoes him in prevailing—he will solace himself with declaring treachery all around. He seizes control: He will be the world's greatest cuckold and its greatest avenger (Greene, 1967, pp. 74-75). It is as if he says, "Bow down to me? No? Well at least the whole world points and laughs at me. And I will show you all."

His inference that his wife and best friend are coupling is absurd to all who surround him and wish him well. But he, because king, can insist on his version

of reality. And he is a king in imaginative and verbal capacity as well. “Is whispering nothing?/ Is leaning cheek to cheek? Is meeting noses?/ Kissing with inside lip?” (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 1.2.283-285). The commanding catalogue of sexual details goes on at considerable length. “Why, then the world and all that’s in ’t is nothing,/ The covering sky is nothing, Bohemia nothing,/ My wife is nothing, nor nothing have these nothings,/ If this be nothing” (1.2. 291-295). Such nihilistic rantings he wishes upon his incredulous good counselor, Camillo. Publicly, and to his wife’s humiliation, he forces on her as well the images by which she may know feelingly what she has caused him to suffer:

There may be in the cup
A spider steeped, and one may drink, depart,
And yet partake no venom, for his knowledge
Is not infected; but if one present
Th’ abhorred ingredient to his eye, make knowne
How he hath drunk, he cracks his gorge, his sides,
With violent hefts. I have drunk, and seen the
spider. (2.1.42-45)

These tormented and tormenting internal and external rantings provide a prime example of a nadir mindstate. The self-induced state, arising as if out of nowhere, highlights jealousy as a mindstate, whereas jealousy in Shakespeare’s play *Othello* had remained fully enmeshed in circumstances of character and plot. Portraying the jealousy simply as mindstate—one that might, for example, migrate to other courtiers—enhances the play’s overall portrait of fragments and fragmenting, internal and external. Even the fact that there is a poetry here of mental spasms and seizures, so well illustrated by the rhythms and images in the spider quote above, reinforces this portrait. The mindstate rises up like a boil. It poses a challenge: For a taint that runs so deep that it seems, as Polixenes would have it, hereditary, how does one devise an antidote?

The balance of sensibility is immediately undone when Leontes surrenders to his jealousy. Significantly, he argues in a manner hyper-rational and hyper-legal as he attempts to persuade Camillo of the lascivious slanders against his own wife and queen. The actor Anthony Sher, in the Royal Shakespeare Company production (1998/99), even ticked off on his fingers various deductions and inductions he obviously considered airtight. There is the first long catalogue of perfidious sexual behaviors in the passage quoted above

(“Is whispering nothing?/ Is leaning cheek to cheek?”) Then comes the airtight logical conclusion, “Why then, the world and all that’s in ’t is nothing.” He precedes this catalogue, and the conclusion that he draws from it, with remarks about proper cogitation:

Ha’ not you seen, Camillo, —
But that’s past doubt, you have, or your eye-glass
Is thicker than a cuckold’s horn, —or heard, —
For to a vision so apparent rumour
Cannot be mute, —or thought, —for cogitation
Resides not in that man that does not think, —
My wife is slippery? (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/
1980b, 1.2.266-272)

Unfortunately, when most in love with his own ruthless powers of observation and argumentation, he is flirting most energetically with upending his own mental balance. He performs, move by move, this jiu-jitsu on himself.

Having tried unsuccessfully to force his good counselor to kill the best friend—both flee—Leontes settles for visiting full punishment on his wife. He advertises her as a slut throughout court and realm, demanding that everyone share his disgust with her and with the treacherous sexuality of the entire gender. In some performances (e.g. Doran 1998/99), Leontes steps forward to work his persuasions on the theater audience as well:

And many a man there is, even at this present,
Now while I speak this, holds his wife by th’arm,
That little thinks she has been sluic’d in ’s absence,
And his pond fish’d by his next neighbor, by
Sir Smile, his neighbor.” (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/
1980b, 1.2.192-196)

The perturbation aroused in him by Hermione’s very pregnant state (Adelman, 2003) helps provoke such graphic transports: The transports might be intensified by a number of things or by a mix—a jealous fear that the woman’s unique faculty affords Hermione a special advantage with his best friend, or else a longing to retreat to the tender protection of the womb, or then again a horrified conviction, as he maintains, that the belly holds his best friend’s bastard.

Leontes sends for a judgment from Apollo’s oracle. He is convinced that, unlike his recalcitrant courtiers and especially one vocal and uniquely unintimidated defender of the Queen, Paulina, the oracle will confirm his imaginings. He has, however, already

summoned his wife to court and worse, already put the newborn daughter out to die by the time the oracular scroll arrives from Delphi. It declares that “Hermione is chaste, Polixenes blameless...Leontes a jealous tyrant, his innocent babe truly begotten, and the King shall live without an heir if that which is lost be not found” (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 3.2. 132-136).

This is a moment when all get another chance to address the awful conundrum of why he should overthrow his own sanity and infect his kingdom for seemingly no good reason. To return to actor Anthony Sher’s performance in the Royal Shakespeare production, Sher parsed this moment quite perfectly. As the oracle is pronounced, Leontes smiles slowly, with demonic intensity, declaring, “There is no truth at all in th’ oracle” (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 3.2.140). This standoff with the gods—he seems to be discovering, in the very instant—is what he had wanted all along. His view of reality is the only one, because he is king. He rules not as a divine delegate but as a divinity.

In this fascinating moment—one which probably takes inflection from the claims to rule by divine right and corresponding misbehavior of James I—in a mystical striving so characteristic of the baroque era, the ruler pretends to stretch for “the farther reaches of human nature,” as Maslow (1971) would have it, but in fact decks himself out in the faux divine.

To reiterate a primary thesis of this article: There can be an orientation that is imbalanced in the masculine direction, hyper-masculine, which skews perception. The pursuit of a ruthless rationality can provide camouflage for the pursuit of unbounded mastery. In the case of Leontes, further evidence of the gender imbalance he seeks are his persecutions which result in the seeming death of his queen (who later returns in a resurrecting miracle) and of his female heir. The one counselor, Paulina—the only prominent female at court—who attempts to rein in his murderous tirades, he threatens to condemn as a witch. This is a concerted effort to place the Feminine in exile from his kingdom, as well as from his insides, his own sensibility. It seems to have succeeded until the end of the tragic opening gambit, at which time he realizes his folly, and turns Paulina into his mother confessor, very much in charge of him; by then, however, he has managed to cause the death of her husband, so she really will come to resemble a nun. Outside as well as inside, gender has gone out of balance.

The health of a gender-balanced sensibility would be this: It attunes to natural cycles and to

cosmic intention, accepting the Mystery rather than solely pursuing the Mastery that belongs to a creatural condition. Shakespeare appears to have advocated the modifying of a hard-core rationalist/rationalizing and authoritarian viewpoint (Leontes doth protest too much that he is no tyrant [Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 2.3.122-124]) through the virtues of the Feminine.

In this particular drama, Shakespeare portrayed a king who confuses the divine right of kings with his own divinity.² One can pause to draw a parallel, observing the damage done to the United States and the globe by the ambitions of what one might consider an imperial presidency: that of George W. Bush. Abraham Lincoln, though a war president, so rightly observed that he worried less about whether God was on his side than about whether he was on God’s side. That is the question in point.

To return to the drama: A split-second later, a messenger runs in to announce that Leontes’ son has died—struck to the quick with the wrongs done his mother and the shame of it all. Hermione, who had been ripped from her childbed to stand public trial, then drops in seeming death from this last straw of sorrow. Leontes repents instantly, hoping his wife has only fainted, but thunderstruck by the loss of his dear son. He finally does wake up.

The tale of Leontes’ court has turned out to be what the young son had been telling his mother before the mental plague broke out: A winter’s tale of a man who lived by a graveyard, a tale of sprites and goblins. At the end of the tragic acts, Sicilia and its shaken king launch upon their 16-year-long, ghost-ridden winter.

A Fragile Pastoral World—

Almost Topsy-Turvy

Next comes a fascinating transition, a moment of passage brimful of danger and opportunity. From such a light and shadow moment of disassembling, can a broader, kinder reassembling occur? Leontes’ courtier, Antigonus, instructed to strand the disavowed royal daughter of Leontes in the wild, deposits her on the shores of Bohemia, Polixenes’ kingdom. Then—in accord with perhaps the most famous and absurdly grotesque stage direction in Shakespeare, “exit pursued by a bear” (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 3.3. 57)—Antigonus dies eaten by that bear. A good old shepherd finds the baby. But the shepherd’s son enters having seen the bloody devouring and seen too a cosmos out of joint, as a great storm swallows up the ship from Sicilia. “Now bless thyself” says the old shepherd, “thou mett’st

with things dying, I with things newborn" (3.3.109-110). Light and dark, paradox. All this might one day be reconciled into a baroque *concordia discors* (Horace, 12th epistle, First Book of Epistles, c. 20 B.C.E.), a harmonizing of the different, and even of opposites. This will come, but not yet.

Next, Time as narrator instructs the audience to leap over 16 years, moving from dark times to bright ones. Suddenly it is a musical comedy world. A rogue, Autolycus, sings songs of spring and his doxies that roll him in the hay. This is Arcadia, a place for fun. The daughter that had been rescued as infant by the old shepherd, thinking herself a shepherdess not a princess, hosts the local sheepshearing festival. She is costumed as a nature goddess, Flora, and her suitor finds that divinity becomes her; the king's son Florizel has chosen her for life. Songs. Celebration. By happenstance, masquers join the festivities, and their satyr dance amplifies the straightforward sensuality of the rural celebrants to a mythical level of raunch.

With good luck rather than bad—and the thunderstorms lower often enough—these different worlds will move toward a reconciliation. The *concordia discors* has in fact specific kinds of clashes to reconcile—from urbane religions to rural and raunchy ones, for the kingdom must bring together, and will benefit from joining, the elite and the folk. Vitality and refinement call to each other, as surely as the shepherdess-princess, Perdita, attracts her royal suitor.

Just as the texture of his speech traces Leontes' flirtation with insanity, so the discontinuities of texture between the various worlds that juxtapose with each other, from tragedy to musical comedy, reflect a cosmic disequilibrium. Yet it is out of the reconciliation of these forces that rebirth and redemption ultimately arise for the king, and with him, for the realm. Shakespeare's late vision takes on a supremely challenging question: Is the life of a person, or of a culture, or of the cosmos as humans perceive it, continuous, such that disruptions should be viewed as most unfortunate and unpredictable *interruptions*? Or is the interrupted life, at least interrupted from a human point of view, precisely that which one can predict and to which all must accommodate?

Shakespeare's solution in *The Winter's Tale* moves by way of pastiche rather than continuous story line and by way of paradox, which, in the worlds of his late plays, is often more catalytic of change than a seeming logical continuity.³ The solution (keeping in

mind that there is no manifesto here, but a complex drama) also moves by way of natural cycle renewal, which has its own predictability, circular not linear, life arising from death as spring does from winter. Finally it moves by the humanly inexplicable renewal that a new cosmic testament can bring, a different cosmic design than appeared to be at work previously.⁴

One thing is certain; nothing remains the same. Polixenes, best friend of Leontes and his victim in the Sicilian realm, now plays the tyrant in his own, much resembling Leontes; he has arrived at the sheepshearing festival in disguise; he bursts out in a foul-mouthed rage, determined to thwart his son's plans to marry the "fresh piece of excellent witchcraft" who must never open her rural latches to the boy, or hoop him either, on pain of death (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 4.4.439-443).

Close Calls, Miracles, and Mindstates to Match

In the meantime there are forces at work to help the couple; they speed the couple's escape from Polixenes' realm back to that of the penitent Leontes, who will be glad to host the son of his long lost friend. But when Polixenes, giving chase, arrives in Sicilia and reveals that the young woman is a shepherd and the marriage forbidden, Leontes now wants to marry her himself. The same Paulina who took Leontes in hand—after he no longer wanted to burn her as a witch—stops him cold; he must not marry this young woman. This is a characteristic close call—threatening to introduce not nature benevolent, but nature run amuck into incest.

Following this there is a discovery scene, narrated in retrospect, revealing that Perdita is the Sicilian princess, his own daughter, not a shepherdess. The young-marriage subplot is back on track and Leontes is rescued from incest. Paulina reconvenes everyone in her own chapel. She has a surprise for them. She has commissioned Julio Romano, a sculptor all the rage, to make a replica of Hermione, the lost wife. Romano's baroque accomplishments are *trompe l'oeuil*—along the lines of painted grapes real enough to eat. What is dream and what is reality? It is the post-innocence baroque theme *par excellence*. But will it be possible for the playwright to pair post-innocent with post-tragic? Sixteen years earlier, Leontes was sure that his dream was reality, until the oracle woke him up. "My life," Hermione had protested at that time, defending her innocence, "stands in the level of your dreams" (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 3.2.80-81).

"If I am not right," Leontes had countered, "the center will not hold a schoolboy's top" (2.1.103-4).

Leontes had lived in a reality—or rather a reality-schema—that could be toppled in a minute. This was not just a personal fact, but a socio-political and even cosmic one as well. He knew that. His would-be antidote was to take a stance as inflexible as any extremist religious stance would be today. His stance asserted that women could not be trusted, that the taint in the flesh was primarily theirs, that he could legalistically reason his way to a certainty that allowed for no competing or coexisting alternative views, and that the gods would prove to be on his side. He was a sexual ideologue. For 16 subsequent years of winter, however, he pursued an inner reform and change.

Today, Leontes stands before an utterly life-like statue of his long lost wife. Leontes falls into sad yet ecstatic transports—he wants to kiss the statue, despite the fact that she, disappointingly, has wrinkles. No no, the paint is not dry on her lips, says Paulina. Everyone gets progressively more still and attentive, morphing from an astonished mood to one fully receptive, body, heart, and spirit. Music plays to enhance the atmosphere. Perdita, the daughter, wants to kneel to the statue—her long lost mother—and ask for its blessing. She excuses herself to all, pacifying with a disclaimer those who might imagine she is sacrilegious. This would be no superstition (i.e., reversion to Catholic icons and a papist preference for kissing them, despite Sicily's [read England's] advance beyond such things. Yes, Leontes' Sicilian court is supposedly pagan Greek, but the story is quickly morphing here into a different religious universe. This back-and-forth about sacrilege is significant because Shakespeare is preparing the audience to ecumenically embrace Catholic along with Anglican sensibility and bypass accusations of papist superstition). Likewise Paulina, the mistress of ceremonies, says she has more magic to do—but not bad magic. With her good magic, however, Paulina can only succeed if everyone, as she instructs the onstage and theater audience, shows a willingness to exercise *faith*.

Then gradually the statue comes awake, moves, steps down forgivingly to embrace Leontes—mercy and forgiveness all around. She turns to the daughter with words of welcome and recognition. Spring has returned to the Leontine winter—to the marriage, family, and realm. All is now aligned with the cosmos as well. How should one view this crucial new alignment?

Renewals and Resolutions

Renewal Through Natural Cycle:

Grafting and the Green World Girl

You see, sweet maid, we marry/ A gentler scion to the wildest stock,/ And make conceive a bark of baser kind/ By bud of nobler race" (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 4.4. 92-95). In dialogue with Perdita, the disguised Polixenes, Leontes' persecuted best friend and Bohemian king, advocates grafting in a way that would, by analogy, bless the marriage of this seeming shepherdess and his son the prince.

Paradoxically enough, he is dead set against such a marriage; but this contradiction is typical of the late play world. If someone like Capra (2004) looked at these Shakespearean paradigm shifts, he might reference chaos and complexity theory and a seeming quantum leap rather than the onward-and-upward continuity of a natural selection paradigm. Paradigm shift by way of quantum leap often characterizes the dynamic in the late plays. There are repeated discontinuities along the lines of paradoxes and unintended consequences. There is the central paradox of a woman brought up as a shepherdess, who will unite with a true-hearted but seemingly feckless prince, willing to risk his inheritance, so as to give birth to a new and better monarch and reign. He will do this all unawares, living only for his present-day love. Again, an explanation of this shift would benefit from allowance for some chaos, whether chaos as understood in common parlance or chaos as new paradigm theorists use it, existing in fact in the context of an ultimately determined outcome. With luck, then, these unions of discordant worlds will issue in a shift toward the *concordia discors* of a New World.

To return to the debate between the young shepherdess and the aging, angry king, Perdita, likewise siding against her own best interests, rejects grafting as unnatural. In the end, Perdita turns out to be sufficiently royal and the grafting proceeds in any case, with Polixenes' blessing. Had she not emerged, to her own surprise and his, as a princess, she would have countered his later tirades: "I was about to speak and tell him plainly/ The selfsame sun that shines upon his court/ Hides not his visage from our cottage" (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 4.4. 45-47). But this democratic outburst need not and does not prevail. Throughout the late plays, the matching up of a girl from (what Northrop Frye [1971] first identified as) the Green World, who then turns out to be noble as well, with that rare creature, the good courtier, brings hope for refreshment and renewal to a jaded court world and

hope for reintegration of the common people in the new assemblage.

Renewal Through Providential Intervention

In *The Winter's Tale* providential design asserts itself not just by way of oracles, or of dreams that designate on which shore the courtier should strand the infant, but by stranger means than these and in less solemn, quirkier tones. The providential hand materializes in the grotesque bear chase that ties up loose ends from the court tragedy. It materializes as well in the rogue Autolycus' helpful aid to the lovers; Autolycus confides to the audience that he means only to do ill and get rich but, despite his *best* worst intentions, he has proven helpful. His shrug is philosophical; it is a world of unintended consequences. The audience, by contrast, gradually gathers that a providential divinity with a dark sense of humor may be turning all to the good.

Hermione too contributes to this portrait of providence. There are details proffered by onstage witnesses that facilitate a naturalistic interpretation of Hermione's seeming rebirth from stone; maybe Paulina, with her mysterious trips during these 16 years, was feeding Hermione. Nevertheless, Shakespeare's intended effect on the audience, both internal to the play and external, is to introduce the presence of Mystery: As the statue warms into flesh, it is a moment of sheer redemptive miracle.

The Royal Shakespeare Company, and director Greg Doran (1998/99), gave backing to the interpretation that Hermione acts as a merciful, miraculous intercessor (Vanita, 2000, p. 1), ending the 16-year purgatorial suffering of Leontes, and therefore of his kingdom; she is one who also officially welcomes fertile spring in the person of her daughter back into the realm. Doran put the star of the sea, the star of Mary, above the statue's niche. The Feminine in all its forms had been expelled from this kingdom; she and Perdita bring it back, and, with it, bring release and a kind of redemption.

The Return of the Mature Feminine

The Anglican replacement of Catholic ascendancy in England had been accompanied by a severe diminishment in the role Mary played in the religion. Edward, son of Henry VIII, presided over removal of Mary icons from their niches, whitewashing of Marian scenes on church walls, and shrinking of her role in the liturgy. She certainly lost any grandeur that distinguished her from a merely faithful human. During Elizabeth's reign, the Queen could stand in for the Blessed Virgin. But a few years after her death, in the Jacobean times of the late plays, those who had prayed to her were now

feeling the absence of Mary (Vanita, 2000, p. 2). Some from the grandparent generation or earlier, for instance, had spirited off or bought the icons when they were tossed during Edward's purges and were probably using them in secret.

Shakespeare would not get jailed for re-importing Catholic elements. James I was a reconciler of the Churches when possible, hoping to make tolerance prevail in his kingdom and also to prevent what would soon become the religiously-colored Thirty Years' War on the continent. James would most likely even tolerate the feminine religious element—as it concerned the Blessed Mother. But what James had done, rather like Leontes, was to expel real live women from his literal presence and the Feminine from his social and theological comprehension of how the cosmos cohered (Crawford, 1999, pp. 357-381); the one exception was his personal cultivation of a great expertise on witches. He eventually sent or released his wife, Anne of Denmark, to another palace, while his court grew homosocial, in great contrast to Elizabeth's court, and, as some complained, brazenly rather than discreetly homosexual (Perry, 2000, pp. 1054-1058). James lavished funds disastrously on his male minions, Robert Carr and then Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, nearly bankrupting the country within a decade of his ascension.

A playwright like Fletcher (1797/1979) flattered James and the hyper-masculine orientation at his court in his play *Bonduca*, which created a convenient revisionist history (Crawford, 1999, pp. 357-381; Fletcher, 1979, pp. 149-259): Fletcher implied that Bonduca/Boadicea, (and Queen Elizabeth by implication, for she was much identified with the Celtic heroine, legendary forestaller of the Roman victory over Britain) was not a real heroine but instead an uppity woman, an obstacle to her hero of a brother. This reinterpretation would help revert gender conception to a time before Elizabeth had commanded great respect—despite refusing to play wife and mother—through sheer competence as political and military ruler. Along similar lines, James now expressly forbade production of Amazon masques, at least insofar as they portrayed strong women; they had enjoyed great popularity at Elizabeth's court and had constituted one of the favorite entertainments of his Queen Anne (Crawford, 1999, pp. 357-381).

Shakespeare is, in his own way, presenting a restoration of gender-balanced sensibility and associating that restoration with a life-saving paradigm shift. This assertion bears not just on the personal case history of Leontes. Relevant to this argument is a portrait, political,

Renewal Through the Feminine

religious, and socio-cultural, of Jacobean times. These times may well have sparked Shakespeare's analysis; inflections that can be discerned and tracked, from culture to drama and back again, argue for such cross-influences.

Hermione as Mary as Brigid

Leontes' wife, Hermione, then, is a Mary figure, who not only brings redemption to couple, family, and realm, but who reintegrates the mature Feminine into a providential Christian pantheon. One may at least view Hermione as a Marian intercessor and more-than-human figure (even in Catholicism Mary's status has alternated between strictly human and more-than-human as recently as Vatican II, which demoted her, and the subsequent Vox Populi revolt against this demotion [Spretnak, 2004]). As to the Royal Shakespeare Company production (1998/99), the star of the sea, which director Doran used over Hermione's niche, is the star not just of Mary but of a Celtic pagan divinity, Brigid (Kate Wolf-Pizor, personal communication, May, 2008). The star was co-opted for Mary by Catholicism, just as local pagan divinities were often co-opted by the Church for its roster of saints. Whether or not Doran performed this pun wittingly, it remains the case that, throughout his production, he rightly captured a Shakespearean ecumenical spirituality: Catholic, Protestant, Greek pagan, and traditional folk pagan .

The following description by French (1981) fills out the various contributions of the Feminine to the Shakespearean array of forces. "Chaste constancy swiftly becomes the cornerstone, the pivot, the crucial element in Shakespeare's morality. It has this semi-divine nature only in women because it symbolizes 'feminine' qualities of harmony, community, tolerance, moral flexibility (within limits), pity, compassion, forgiveness, and loving nutritiveness" (p. 330). The qualities are then seen as ultimate moral goods, what all humans really want, "or would if they were not blind. In Shakespeare's division of experience, however, men cannot be forced to revere these things. The process of coming to recognize these goods is a process of education in seeing" (p. 330).

It is important to add to this portrait the political strengths of three mature women in the late plays, Hermione, Paulina, and Katherine. Katherine of Aragon, not from *The Winter's Tale* like the other two but from the subsequent *Henry VIII* (c. 1612-1613), gives speeches that are in some sense adaptations from Hermione's speech, as if Shakespeare had a crucial idea he felt compelled to revisit and rework. Both stand trial at the hands of their sexually perturbed husbands without, due to their own

foreign origins, proper protection, with almost no hope of disproving the legal frame-up—carefully reasoned, of course—which they can only counter with their candid innocence. Both exhibit complete integrity, along with an abiding and forgiving view of their husband and king—as dear and honorable, in Hermione's case, or as literally a delegate of divinity, in Katherine's, though no substitute for it; they in their turn speak truth, as Katherine says, "i' the presence" (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 4.2.40).

I stick to Hermione's words because this inquiry focuses on *The Winter's Tale*. The reader will catch the tone of her "chaste constancy." As to the candid rebuke that Katherine is willing to offer Henry VIII, in *The Winter's Tale* this is offered especially by Paulina to Leontes, sometimes when no male courtier will make a peep, perhaps because they have positions to protect; driven by her cherishing of the Queen, she lambastes him. Hermione herself speaks more gently: "Adieu my lord./ I never wished to see you sorry, now/ I trust I shall" (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 2.1.123-125). Here again is the Queen's dignified voice: "You, my lord, best know,/ Who least will seem to do so, my past life/ Hath been as continent, as chaste, as true,/ As I am now unhappy" (3.2.32-42). She nevertheless wishes him no harm, in accord with all her previous appeals to him. She punctuates her defeat: "The Emperor of Russia was my father./ O, that he were alive and here beholding/ His daughter's trial! That he did but see/ The flatness of my misery, yet with eyes/ Of pity, not revenge!" (3.2.119-123).

Integration of the Anima

The redemptive rebalancing of Masculine with Feminine happens not only externally but also internally. There is the Jungian framework: These daughters and sometimes these female counselors and wives, welcomed back "into the bosom" of the ruler, can rebalance him internally. In *The Winter's Tale*, the preparation for this may be seen in Leontes' radically altered relation to Paulina. After mercilessly ragging on Antigonus for being henpecked by his wife Paulina, Leontes discovers that he himself will benefit from hanging on Paulina's arm for 16 years to regain his sanity.

What should be added to this picture are two substantiating passages. One is from *The Winter's Tale* and spoken by the counselor Camillo as a kind of diagnosis of the illness. He describes Leontes as "One/ Who in rebellion with himself will have/All that are his so too" (Shakespeare, 1610-1611/1980b, 1.2.354-355). The second passage is spoken by old Gonzalo at the conclusion of *The Tempest* and, characteristically, sums up perhaps too

neatly a path to self-actualization; nevertheless, we can appreciate his review of the action and the implied moral he draws from it. O rejoice, he says: "In one voyage/ Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis,/ And Ferdinand, her brother, found a wife/ Where he himself was lost, Prospero his dukedom/ In a poor isle and all of us ourselves/ When no man was his own" (5.1.208-215).

Although in this inquiry one can draw the dark parallels between Jacobean times and our own, the bright ones are also evident. Shakespeare reconciled seeming irreconcilables in his late, Jacobean-era theater pieces; he established an embracing context by way of his pluralistic, ecumenical sensibility, a sensibility that is played out on stage. What may seem like an equalizing of all versions of truth such that each flies off in its own direction and none prevails, may instead, when properly harmonized, rearrange into an earth rich with diversity under an ecumenically embracing sky.

How is this rearrangement brought about? A primary element in the Shakespearean healing is the revaluing of the Feminine. This includes a crucial revaluing of a young female character, Perdita, showing that the young Feminine brings renewal on multiple levels (Hunter, 2005)—psychological, political, natural, and cosmic. Shakespeare amplifies Perdita's contribution by deploying her in a mythopoetic manner: She is draped in images of Proserpina, which is to say, Persephone. Healing is also reflected in his use of the mature Feminine, an element in this play that may be enriched and supplemented with references to other late-play female characters.⁵

Both postmodern and Jacobean baroque sensibilities seem, at first glance, to issue from socio-cultural disarray and/or address it. However, it seems that Shakespeare saw internal psychological disarray as a crucial generator for social and cosmic disorder. There could be no addressing the wider problems without first digging deep into the problem of who humans are as individuals and as a species. Can such a creature make a New World? in what context? in what manner?

Fully digesting *The Winter's Tale* may not be easy; nevertheless it offers excellent fare, with its marvels and its various despairs, despair over coherence or rather the lack of it, with its wild pastiche of comic lights and tragic darks, its flirtation with utter chaos, its doses of cosmic whimsy that save the day. *The Winter's Tale* in recent decades has enjoyed productions that signal a revived assent to its dislocating jumps; they are in stark contrast with the fixer-upper versions it underwent during the Age of Reason. This is perhaps because postmoderns can resonate to some

of the horrific and, on the other hand, comically absurd—almost kitsch—discontinuities in the play.

The play displays an ecumenical comfort with many versions of the cosmos, from secular to Christian to ancient and (Jacobean) contemporary pagan. Such an ecumenical tolerance offered balm back then to a fractured sensibility and society and could do so now. In sum, *The Winter's Tale* is not just deconstructive but reconstructive as well. In that sense, it offers a step beyond postmodernist skepticism, if the following description accurately captures that skepticism: "Where modernism asserts centering, fusing, continuity once the break with tradition has already occurred—postmodernism decanters, enframes, discontinues, and fragments the prevalence of modern ideals" (Silverman, 1990, p. 5, as cited in Hunt, 1995).

But again, the baroque sensibility and its art, though sitting in a wider arc of baroque theatrical development from 1575 through 1725 (Norman, 2001), may be scanned not just for distress but for a potential healing; this developed most emphatically for Shakespearean works after the shift to James I in 1603. The following section considers parallels and differences between postmodern and baroque issues.

Worlds Juxtaposed and Superimposed:

A Tense Order

Traits in baroque theatrical art, which is synergistic with other baroque visual and literary arts, are these: There is a Counter-Reformation sensibility, that is, the return of a Catholic sensibility accenting a sensuous presentation of miracle and mystery (Norman, 2001, pp. 2-3). There is repeated dislocation, disorientation, discovery that what one took for reality is dream and what one took for dream is reality. There are intersecting planes of reality (Huddleston, 2001, pp. 15-17). For example, the arrival and pronouncement of a damning Greek oracle splinters the otherwise fairly secular court of King Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*; a masque of satyrs in the ensuing sheepshearing festival on Arcadian shores seems to translate a robustly sensual rural scene into a mythical realm of raunch; in the finale of the play a statue in a niche turns what was an art world into a miracle-mystery realm as the Queen steps down, suddenly warm and alive, and, like an intercessor divinity or at least a beyond-human figure, dispenses forgiveness all around. Likewise, the dark tragic opening world juxtaposes with the Arcadian musical comedy world, which juxtaposes again with the hushed chapel miracle-mystery world. In short, the cosmos is ripped into seemingly disparate realms. The damning oracle mentioned above, arriving from the Olympian

Apollo, smashes apart the last semblance of coherence, wrongheaded as it might be, in Leontes' artifact of a court world.

The plays present scenarios that are threatened with disorder, even chaos, but the picture does then reassemble into its prior form. Hierarchy is reconstituted but tension remains, because one has glimpsed an abyss. The maw of Leontes' insanely misplaced jealousy yawns to swallow everything—himself, his family, his realm; it seems even to throw the universe out of joint. Worlds coincide, collide, superimpose, and rearrange. But blessed hierarchy—though viewed with less conviction in a postlapsarian world—finally reasserts itself. For characters and audience there is, at the end, a smiling through the tears.

One should add into the mix the literal political context for a play like *The Winter's Tale*, which centers on a king so lacking in diplomacy that the court and realm implode. One might regard the severe religious tensions, which flared up into Civil War in England 26 years after Shakespeare's death in 1616, and the Thirty Years' War that began in 1618 and decimated the European continent, as posing some parallel to the barely ordered tension that prevails today. Shakespeare portrayed, in the reconciliatory endings of *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*, a pluralistic tolerance that accommodated differences. The remainder of this inquiry looks not just to the Feminine but also to its role in establishing an embracing and ecumenical tolerance as central to the hope, then and now, for healing.

Translating Shakespeare for Our Times: Future Research

It is time to revisit questions posed earlier in this inquiry: "Can such a creature make a New World? If so, in what context and in what manner?"⁶ The New World this creature might hope to establish cannot thrive without a basic change of heart to motivate living together in a peaceful polity. Paradigm shift needs to be not just external but rooted in a basic shift in perception.

The postmodern human sensibility and context, like Shakespeare's, is widely diverse, internally and externally, and best comprehended through a pluralistic approach. An ecumenical embrace, a mutual appreciation of differences, is required. Also, clearly, both Shakespeare and we ourselves hope to see an urban world that comes around, if belatedly, to harmonize with a rural one; we must revive our respect for, and alignment with, the rhythms and requirements of nature. The Shakespearean recruitment of a Green World Girl like Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* to be a progenitor of a New World, with

her fresh, instinctively refined sensibility and pure vision, would persuade us to adopt a respect for the Feminine, both as a gender and as an archetypal energy that spans genders. This is an energy that aids in aligning with those natural rhythms and powers which, when respected, bring renewal and, when despised and defied, as in the current denial of global warming by some groups, threaten to bring disaster.

There is a psychological perspective on these matters: Resistance to nature can link to a hyper-masculine insistence on Mastery and therefore resistance to things uncontrollable and unforeseeable. Such resistance might profitably be transmuted into a more androgynous appreciation of the Mystery of our human context, with an accompanying tolerance for ambiguity, contradiction, and paradox, for a *concordia discors*. It will be important for us to tolerate unknowing long enough to break through to something new; this should have all the more poignant appeal as contemporary global society faces an ecological, social, political, religious, and economic landscape that shifts with bewildering rapidity (Schavrien, 2009).

French (1981) examined Shakespearean male protagonists who set themselves against the frightening fluidity of their experience, and with this as backdrop summarized the contrasting virtues of female characters throughout the Shakespearean corpus. These virtues, which the human species would do well to augment, include "harmony, community, tolerance, moral flexibility (within limits), pity, compassion, forgiveness, and loving nutritiveness" (p. 330). She highlighted these virtues as the necessary counterbalance to qualities, necessary and often beneficent, that Shakespeare attributed to the masculine: "structures, permanencies, control, individualism" (p. 339). She deplored the dualities and gender assignments but considered it mandatory to spell out such divisions, which are often enforced in too rigid a fashion, if they are to be overcome.

Parenthetically, French (1981) noted the fact that these supposedly feminine virtues apply to the inlaw rather than the outlaw Feminine. Shakespearean female characters, with the rare exception of someone like Cleopatra, fall short of qualifying as benevolent archetypes or as patterns of virtue if they display an autonomous sexuality—for instance, one that fails to be happily and submissively harnessed, in the end, to a single man. But that theme must be left to a different study.

If French's (1981) analysis seems an early one in gender studies, perhaps this paper's opening analyses

of present-day politics suggests the ongoing relevance of her insights. In addition to augmenting the social virtues which both French and Shakespeare highlighted, the Feminine dearly needs to be reintegrated in the divine, however one conceives of that cosmic dimension—immanent, transcendent, or both.

Relevant to the divine and the human relation to it, is the quality that Paulina in *The Winter's Tale* invokes: *faith* (Schavrien, 2009). Even if one chooses no particular divinity, it is possible to at least take a leap of faith, to imagine that there exists a context more disposed to support our best intentions than to thwart them. One can choose to believe in a benevolent Something rather than in Leontes' Nothing.

Proceeding within these contexts and in this manner it may be possible to make a New World. When this end is pursued in a *manner* that dares to have faith, and in the *context* of this good-willing cosmos, with its riddling patterns of catastrophe and miracle, even such a *creature* as we are, horrific and splendid, can do this. The key to paradigm shift as a redemptive enterprise will be the further investigation of and appreciation for renewal through the Feminine.

Notes

1. Implied by this remark, or perhaps influencing it, would be Hannah Arendt's (1994) interpretation of Eichmann's evil as a banal evil of careerism.
2. There is a portrait that Rubens made for and of James I, ascending to heaven and greeted by angels, which carefully details the drunkard's nose on James and his seeming befuddlement and disorientation as he transports upward. (Rubens, Apotheosis of King James I, 1636).
3. Recent paradigm shift theory no longer assumes a smooth evolutionary continuity, as in a survival of the fittest selection process. Shift theories now accommodate a chaos and complexity dynamic along with quantum leaps to new levels—not just continuity as native to a dynamic of change, but also discontinuity (Capra, 2002, pp. 174-175).
4. In his penultimate collaborative play, *Henry VIII*, Shakespeare even outdid his discontinuity texturing in *The Winter's Tale*. Elizabeth I arrives amidst Henry VIII's murderously persistent pursuit of a male heir; she is, paradoxically, the heir he searches for; furthermore, out of her "prince of peace" persona will arise another would-be figure of peace, James; he

comes from her as the phoenix does from the ashes. This birth lacks even the continuity of natural cycle; it shares, with the resurrection of Queen Hermione from stone, a miraculous texture.

5. Of course, any generalization regarding the Feminine has been rightly called into question by many a postmodern deconstructionist, social constructivist, or member of a marginalized population struggling to break free of stereotypes. In both postmodern flux and Shakespeare's baroque flux, an essentialized Feminine either never existed at all or holds its shape incontestably only in some world before or beyond the one known to the senses.
6. Several of the passages that follow in this section resemble passages in an article by Schavrien (2008), listed in the references. Both articles were conceived simultaneously; this one reinforces and sets in a different context the conclusions of its sister article.

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